



U.S. Department of Justice  
United States Attorney  
District of Kansas

## NEWS RELEASE

Eric Melgren, U.S. Attorney

• 0

### Contact: Jim Cross

(316) 269-6481

### Headquarters

1200 Epic Center  
301 N. Main  
Wichita, Kansas 67202  
(316)269-6481  
FAX (316)269-6484

### Topeka Office

444 Quincy  
Topeka, Kansas 66683

### Kansas City Office

500 State Avenue  
Suite 360  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News releases are available at [www.usdoj.gov/usao/ks/](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ks/)

Oct. 27, 2004

## NEWTON COUPLE CHARGED WITH ABUSE OF MENTALLY ILL PATIENTS

WICHITA, KAN. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced the unsealing of a complaint charging **Arlan D. Kaufman**, 68, Newton, and **Linda J. Kaufman**, 61, Newton, with holding residents of the Kaufman's group home in a state of involuntary servitude and making them work in the nude.

The Kaufmans were arrested Oct. 26, 2004 and made their first appearance in U.S. District Court in Wichita, Kan. today. They are scheduled for a detention hearing at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 3, before U.S. Magistrate Donald W. Bostwick.

A criminal complaint and affidavit filed with the court alleges that residents of Kaufman House Residential Group Treatment Center, Inc. in Newton, Kan., were forced to work on the Kaufmans' farm and suffered other abuses while in the care of the Kaufmans.

An affidavit signed by a special agent of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Investigations, says the Kaufmans have owned and operated Kaufman House since 1985 as a residential facility for mentally ill adults. Some of the 14 residents who have stayed at Kaufman House during that time received Social Security benefits and Medicare benefits because of impairments caused by their mental illness. The affidavit says that Arlan Kaufman was a licensed social worker, although his license lapsed in 2002, and Linda Kaufman is a registered nurse.

According to the affidavit, the Butler County Sheriff's Department was called to Arlan Kaufman's farm at 7310 NW Shumway in Potwin, Kan. on Nov. 8, 1999 to respond to a citizen complaint that individuals were working outside in the nude. Deputies found two nude people working in the yard, as well as two other people working near the barn, all of whom

(More)

were residents of Kaufman house and were under the Kaufmans' care. The residents told the deputies that they were not paid to work. One resident told deputies that the Kaufmans had taken residents on a trip to Florida and the residents were working to pay off the cost of the trip. Each of the four residents told deputies they depended on the Kaufmans to manage their medical and financial affairs, and that nudism was part of the Kaufmans' program of treatment.

According to the affidavit, interviews with residents produced evidence of a "climate of fear" in Kaufman House built on abuses by the Kaufmans including:

- Using a stun gun on a resident's stomach, testicles and feet in the presence of other residents.
- Punishing residents for violating rules at Kaufman House by taking away their clothes.
- Frequently taking residents to the Kaufman's farm and directing them to work in the nude.
- Discouraging residents from contacting friends and family.

If convicted, the Kaufmans face up to 20 years in federal prison. The case was investigated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Investigations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Butler County Sheriff's Department. It is being prosecuted by Lisa Krigsten of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice.

As in any criminal case, a person is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. The charges filed merely contain allegations of criminal conduct.